



Ecosystem Protections Working Group

Meeting Minutes

Date: 07/06/2011

Start Time: 2:00pm

End Time: 3:12pm

Meeting Method: Conference Call, Go-To Meeting

Attendance:

Jack Kittinger (Call lead), Collin Crecco, Take Tomson, Alex Sheftic, Rachel Sprague, Jonathan Martinez, Hannah Bernard, Lisa White, Malia Chow, Joe Paulin, Micki Ream, Jean Souza, Joey Lecky, Paul Wong

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

- I. Meeting Opening – role call
- II. Ecosystem-based management approach and its application to the Sanctuary and this working group

Jack began with discussion about the role of the WG and how it will develop a process for the development of recommendations. Public comment and input from the SAC will be important in deciding if and how to transform the sanctuary to an ecosystem-based approach. Public comments and input from other voices should be heard. What should be the role of the working group?

Members of the WG were confused as to their role since the Sanctuary has publically stated that all working groups were to operate under the assumption that the Sanctuary will become an ecosystem based Sanctuary – an issue that was mentioned at the last SAC meeting on Maui. While this assumption helps other WGs consider possible future roles for the Sanctuary, concerns were brought up that this assumption would undermine the role of this particular WG since its main objective was to provide such recommendations to the SAC. While one possible recommendation might be that the Sanctuary follows an ecosystem-based approach, it was not logical that this issue already be decided.

Many WG members believe the ecosystem-based approach is necessary to protect other resources and systems involved in sanctuary waters. Other living and non-living resources are in need of conservation efforts. There are many alternative management strategies such as adding additional species to the Sanctuary protected list, and now, all alternatives should be heard and considered. The list of alternatives should include an EBM approach (it is the preferred management approach at this time, and is consistent with US ocean policy). As pointed out in WG roadmap, this group will weigh whether to go for EBM approach or not.



Ecosystem Protections Working Group

Meeting Minutes

The threats to resources need to be identified for the sanctuary to determine what options it has. Threats to monk seals, corals, false killer whales, all need to be considered for further analysis into the decision-making process.

Public comments ranged from acceptance of an ecosystem-based approach to the sanctuary minimizing its presence in the community. Many fishermen and tourism industry representatives (kayak, snorkel, boat tours, etc.) have made it clear that they do not want sanctuary protection of extra resources such as coral reefs. Some public comments reveal a preference for the sanctuary to protect resources, such as reefs, in more indirect ways like monitoring land-based runoff. Overall the public comments indicate support for EBM. But to do that we will have to educate the public and those who are against it. Also, engage these folks in order to bring their concerns in, a reasonable compromise.

The public provided us with the major concerns, but we are now moving into the stage in the MPR process that involves more technical expertise. Therefore, it is important to expend energy on realistic and possible alternatives. There should be a technical roundtable meeting to weigh the likeliness, pros, and cons of each alternative presented to narrow in on a preferred alternative.

The group discussed whether to focus solely on an EBM approach, or should that be one the proposed alternative management approaches, which may include the status quo, adding additional species, etc. Alternatives and ecosystem-based management approach should be defined. Possible alternatives include:

1. Status quo: Aspects of this alternative include current regulations, structure, and other activities the sanctuary is engaged in now. Humpback whales would remain the focus, but other current work the Sanctuary collaborates with other agencies on would continue.

This alternative would be the bare-minimum because the sanctuary going away would take an act of Congress and is not considered an alternative.

2. Additional species: This alternative would include adding additional species previously proposed in the 2007 assessment report to the governor and species recommended by technical expertise in the working group.

Species mentioned: turtles, monk seals, cetaceans, sea birds, coral reefs. Species that have been previously proposed for protection and conservation in the 2007 report and known from sanctuary's technical expertise should be included in possible protection.

3. Ecosystem-based management approach: Ecosystem-based management is an integrated approach to management that considers the entire ecosystem, including humans. The goal of EBM is to maintain an ecosystem in a healthy, productive and resilient condition so that it can provide the services human want and need. EBM differs from current approaches that usually focus on a single species, sector, activity, or concern; it considers the cumulative impacts of different sectors" (McLeod et al. 2005).



Ecosystem Protections Working Group

Meeting Minutes

An ecosystem-based approach can take a number of forms however such as adopting various regions with known ecosystems in need of protection. There may be several sub-alternatives underneath this option. COMPASS defines ecosystem-based management as an integrated approach that includes the ecosystem as a whole (including the human environment) and considers cumulative impacts of various sectors. There was general consensus to keep a broad definition.

A critical habitat designation-approach was discussed as another possible alternative, but may complicate existing conditions. The sanctuary should be separate from critical habitat to avoid complications.

A matrix for current and some future laws/regulations related to Hawaii's marine species and ecosystems has been provided as a draft document. Advantages of additional protections on animals should be considered. For instance, the Hawaiian monk seal is already protected by federal and state laws so is it worth additional protection?

Develop a matrix based on Phase I activities that shows different management alternatives Threats and implementation and enforcement should be on matrix.

There is an enforcement group (Take), and this group could evaluate the enforcement options associated with each

Matrix should consider what the value added would be. What would sanctuary add to each type of alternative? Could be not just ecosystem protection, but also education & outreach, etc.

III. Topic Report Out – postponed to next call

Reviewed Take's enforcement matrix briefly. Add application/effectiveness evaluation.

IV. Discuss WG process, including timeline for drafting recommendations

Advice from experts on biological aspects of ecosystem protection should be contacted to make more informed decisions, but we need a better idea of the process the working group is using first. In the past, other working groups have drafted questions/topics and distributed them to technical experts for feedback. Individuals of the enforcement working group can also be consulted with to collaborate with enforcement/monitoring plans. The public should also be included during the process.

V. Public Comment – no public comment

VI. Agenda items for next call

ACTION ITEM Next call: Topic group leaders will report out on how the information they have gathered and how they inform each alternative.

What are the steps beyond next call:

1. Our own information gathering on these topics



Ecosystem Protections Working Group

Meeting Minutes

2. Engaging technical experts on their assessment of alternatives; consult with them to see what threats are, etc. for each alternative; Jon: we could engage them by drafting questions from the WG and then send them off to the tech experts, who can respond. E.g., What are the conservation priorities for X,Y,Z?

Next meeting: 07/20/2011 at 2:00pm